

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07
FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02
OPIC-03 SP-02 LAB-04 EPG-02 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05
SS-15 STR-04 CEA-01 AGRE-00 /091 W
-----061826Z 086312 /45

R 061500Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3418
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 0517

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, ETRD, NS, UR
SUBJ: SOVIET TRADE AND AID INTEREST IN SURINAM

1. ALTHOUGH DIPLOMATIC TIES BETWEEN SURINAM AND THE USSR HAVE BEEN VERY LIMITED, THE RUSSIANS HAVE BEGUN TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF EXPANDED TRADE AND AID RELATIONS. THUS, ON HIS FIRST VISIT SINCE PRESENTING HIS CREDENTIALS LAST JANUARY SOVIET AMBASSADOR V.I. ANDREEV (RESIDENT IN BOGOTA) BROUGHT ALONG HIS COMMERCIAL ATTACHE, V. KOUZHKOV, FOR A FOUR-DAY STAY IN PARAMARIBO DURING THE WEEK OF MAY 30 TO MEET WITH GOS OFFICIALS AND BUSINESS LEADERS.

2. ANDREEV REPORTEDLY TOLD ACTING MINISTER PRESIDENT VAN GENDEREN THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS PREPARED, IF THE GOS ASKS FOR IT, TO ASSIST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SURINAM, POINTING OUT THE EXPERIENCE WHICH THE USSR HAS HAD WITH HYDROELECTRIC PROJECTS IN OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL GOS NEWS SERVICE, VAN GENDEREN IS SAID TO HAVE REPLIED THAT THE GOS IS READY TO STUDY SERIOUSLY ANY OFFER OF HELP
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THAT CAN ASSIST IN MAKING SURINAM'S ECONOMY INDEPENDENT WITHOUT "GNAWING AT" ITS NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE.

3. VAN GENDEREN IS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD ANDREEV THAT SURINAM IS VERY INTERESTED IN ENTERING INTO TRADE RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, PARTICULARLY WITH THE AIM OF SELLING SURINAMESE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN THE USSR.

THE EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT THE SOVIETS, FOR THEIR PART, HAVE SUGGESTED THAT AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT COULD BE EXPORTED TO SURINAM.

4. COMMENT: THE RUSSIAN OFFER OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE, EXPECIALLY IN THE CONTEXT OF HYDRO PROJECTS, COULD BE OF INTEREST TO THE GOS WHICH IS HAVING DIFFICULTY ROUNDING UP FINANCING FOR ITS MULTIMILLION DOLLAR KABALEBO HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME IN WEST SURINAM. ON THE OTHER HAND, RESPONSIBLE SURINAMESE LEADERS (AS REFLECTED BY VAN GENDEREN'S REPLY TO ANDREEV) ARE WARY OF SOVIET INTENTIONS IN THE REGION AND ARE NOT LIKELY TO RUSH HEADLONG INTO A MAJOR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USSR. AS FOR TRADE PROSPECTS, WE WOULD GUESS THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE VERY LITTLE TO OFFER TO THIS CONSUMER-ORIENTED WESTWARD-LOOKING SOCIETY.
ZURHELLEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 06-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PARAMA00517
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770201-0322
Format: TEL
From: PARAMARIBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770687/aaaacyig.tel
Line Count: 78
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 143f3984-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2263205
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET TRADE AND AID INTEREST IN SURINAM
TAGS: EAID, ETRD, PFOR, NS, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/143f3984-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009